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Iraq & Arab States

AIDE-MEMOIRE

The Minister of Lebanon to the United States spent the month of February, 1953, in Lebanon where he had extensive conversations with the authorities of his country and with many authorities from other Arab countries over the affairs of Lebanon and the Arab world and their relations to the Western world in general, and to the United States in particular. The present aide-memoire represents his best thinking on some of the elements and presuppositions of a total Near-Eastern settlement. He has taken into account not only the interests of Lebanon and the Near East, but especially also the community of interests between the Near East and the Western world. For he firmly believes that the fate of the Near East and of Lebanon in particular should be indissolubly linked with that of the West, and especially of the United States. The following plan consists for the most part of general principles each one of which can be extensively developed. While the President of Lebanon has read and approved of these ideas in general, the Minister of Lebanon to the United States alone takes responsibility for them.

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1. Egypt.

The United States to continue performing its good offices towards promoting a final Anglo-Egyptian settlement. On the basis of an agreement among the powers concerned, the United States to play a more active role in the defense of the Near East, and in the preparation of the Arabs for defense. Active concern and assistance by the United States in the solution of Egypt's economic and social problems.

2. Palestine.

(a) Rightly or wrongly, the Arabs are deeply convinced that present-day Israel is but a bridgehead from which the Zionists, at the opportune moment, will sweep over and conquer the entire Arab Near East, or at least as much of it as possible, or as is necessary for them. Witness (i) the demands of some parties and leaders in Israel's Parliament for an immediate annexation by force of the remaining parts of Palestine and of Jordan; (ii) the inscription inside the Knesset of Israel that Israel's realm extends from the Nile to the Euphrates; (iii) the uninterrupted--if presently a bit slowed-down--flow of Jewish immigration; (iv) the rising clamor

to "ingather" the Iron Curtain Jews as a result of alleged Communist persecution; (v) the openly expressed dreams and ambitions of Zionist leaders in regard to southern Lebanon; and (vi) the encouragement Zionism received and still receives from certain Western sta[illegible]. The Arabs, unless they are to turn to any source to help them achieve a sense of security, must be disabused of the conviction that the West has so to speak handed them over to the Zionists. The existence of Zionist pressure groups in Western democracies and their extraordinary activities in influencing statesmen and public opinion will continue to be a matter of deep concern to the Arabs. There are two ways in which the mind of the Arabs may be put at ease, at least in a preliminary way, in regard to this matter. First, the 3-power declaration of May 25, 1950, must be reaffirmed and strengthened. If this strengthened reaffirmation should come as a solemn declaration by the highest Western authorities (for instance, in the United States by the President), it would make a deep impression. Second, the Arabs must be strengthened internally so as to feel that they can defend themselves against attack. Since

it is inconceivable that Israel will ever be forsaken by the West in case of emergency, but not inconceivable—or at least not inconceivable to the same extent—that the Arabs, notwithstanding any solemn declaration made by the West to the contrary, will not under one pretext or another be forsaken should Israel propose to expand, it is evident that there is thus an essential inequality in the ultimate sense of security as between the Arabs and Israel. To redress this balance of inner security, the Arabs must be far more strengthened than they are at present.

(b) The West must urge upon Israel to perform an act of restitution to the Arabs that might call forth a response of good will and confidence on their part. For without Arab good will and confidence, Israel cannot endure. The only act that might begin to restore confidence is significant restitution of territory. But it happens that Israel occupies by force more than was assigned to it by the United Nations. Therefore restitution of territory, as for instance in the case of Western Galilee, is (i) the only way to begin to restore confidence, (ii) fully within the

intent of the United Nations, (iii) an act which will help to prevent the development of a psychosis of war in the area as a result of the belief that boundaries can be established only by force of arms, and (iv) inevitable for the establishment of the natural continuity that has always existed in the south between Egyptian Territory and neighboring Arab Territories.

(c) In addition to all this, this restitution will enable a considerable proportion of the Arab refugees to be repatriated. The Arab refugee problem is the most vicious source of disaffection and subversion in the Near East. It is really not possible to suppose, as past schemes seem to have supposed, that this problem can be divested of its political overtones and can be treated on a purely humanitarian or economic basis. A much bolder approach is clearly indicated. The only reasonable and in the end practicable solution of this problem is to make it possible for the greater part of the refugees to be resettled on Palestinian soil.

(d) The Western world, and the United States in particular, must lift the question of Jerusalem above the sphere of

political strife and contention, and help honor the decision of more than two-thirds of the United Nations which have thrice willed Jerusalem as a corpus separatum. It can be shown (i) that Jerusalem--and not just the so-called Holy Places--can and should be internationalised; (ii) that indeed this is the repeatedly defied decision of the United Nations, a decision that the United States, doubtless for special reasons of its own, has not seen fit so far to respect; (iii) that dynamic Zionism will never rest short of taking hold of the Old City, the site of the Temple; (iv) that if Jerusalem becomes a center of high political activity, and so long as it remains such a center, there will never be peace in the Near East, and perhaps even beyond the Near East; (v) that one of the most important acts by the United States that might help reestablish faith in America throughout the Arab world is for the United States to declare itself and work for the internationalization of Jerusalem, an act that will only bring the United States, which has repeatedly said--as for instance lately by President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles--that its policy is to support and strengthen the

United Nations, in line with the decisions of the world organization; and (vi) that the internationalization of Jerusalem as a corpus separatum may usher in a new era in the history of the Holy City, to the end that it become a universal center of spiritual interaction and cooperation between the three great monotheistic faiths.

(e) In short, the United States to help implement the three standing resolutions of the United Nations with respect to Palestine: that concerning boundaries, that concerning Arab refugees, and that concerning the internationalization of Jerusalem.

(f) Adequate compensation for lost or relinquished property in Palestine.

(g) The rights of owners of private property in Palestine who do not wish to relinquish or sell their property must be guaranteed under international law.

(h) A bolder and more vigorous promotion of the resettlement wherever they can be resettled of those among the Arab refugees who cannot, for whatever reason, be repatriated into Palestine.

(i) Continued Jewish immigration into Palestine is a source of great concern to the Arabs.

(j) Normal relations between the Arab states and Israel cannot be made a precondition for just and normal relations between the Arabs and the Western world, nor can they result from external pressure upon the Arabs.

3. Lebanon.

(a) The revenue from petroleum companies must be augmented to something of the order of ten million dollars annually, to be used as a separate fund for the newly constituted Board of Economic Development. With every precaution taken by the Government to spend this sum on sound projects of development, Lebanon can become a contagious center of health and contentment in the Arab world.

(b) The continuation and enlarging of Point Four aid.

(c) Lebanon's rearmament needs: at least one fully equipped division with which to defend our boundaries and all our vital establishments--ports, airports, bridges, highways. In case of emergency, Lebanon prepared fully to stake its lot with the Western world on condition (i) its

sovereignty be fully respected, and (ii) it be rearmed to play its full part in its self-defense.

4. Near Eastern Conference.

Lebanon at the right moment to call for a Near Eastern conference to be held in Beirut and to comprise all the states concerned. Conference to be very carefully prepared for in advance.

5. Schemes of Development.

The United States to help and assist the promotion of vast schemes of development, national and regional.

6. Western Policy

Absolute necessity of a high-level, long-range, coordinated Western policy, without petty jealousies or rivalries.

Washington, D. C.
April 3, 1953